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Ahead of Modi's Russia trip, Army gets 35,000 'Kalashnikov' rifles

Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt Ltd has delivered the first batch of made-in-India Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Army. IRRPL, located in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi, is a joint venture of Indian defence PSUs with Concern Kalashnikov and Rosoboronexport of Russia. The first phase of the project has been completed with the production and transfer of 35,000 rifles to the Army, Rosoboronexport said. The JV plans to make over 6 lakh assault rifles for the Indian defence forces.

LEFT TURN WITH MEGA LABOUR LANDSLIDE IN UK

Keir Starmer is new PM; Expected to keep up good ties with India

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

AFTER sitting on the opposition benches for more than a decade, the Labour Party on Friday stormed to power in the UK, ending 14 years of Conservative rule. Labour leader Keir Starmer assumed charge as the 58th prime minister after his customary audience with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace.

"Our country has voted decisively for change, for national renewal and a return of politics for public service," said Starmer in his inaugural address from a lectern outside 10 Downing Street, the official residence of the British PM.

Starmer, 61, noted that people have become disillusioned and cynical about politics and his priority is to restore their faith in government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Starmer adding that he looks forward to a constructive collaboration to strengthen India-UK relations.

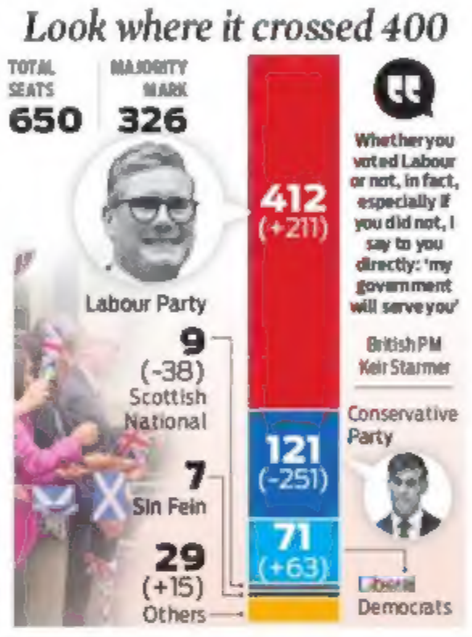
Modi also commented on outgoing prime minister Rishi Sunak's leadership: "Thank you Rishi Sunak for your admirable leadership of the UK, your active contribution to deepen the ties between India and the UK during your term in office."

Accepting defeat, Sunak said he respects the people's mandate. "I have given this job my all. But you all have sent a clear message, and yours is the only judgement that matters. This is a difficult day, but I leave this job honoured to have been the Prime Minister of the best country in the world," Sunak said in his resignation speech.

The change of guard in London happens at a time when the free trade agreement (FTA) between India and UK is in the final stages. Starmer has often maintained that he wants good relations with the Modi-led government. The FTA also featured in the party's poll manifesto which stated that they were committed to pursuing a new strategic partnership with India.

Soon after taking charge, Starmer named David Lammy as his foreign secretary. A backer of strong bilateral ties with India, Lammy had said last month that he would be visiting New Delhi within the first month of office, if his party was voted to power. P13

Britain's Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria wave to the crowds from the doorstep of 10 Downing Street in London on Friday | AFP/PTI



In SC, govt, NTA oppose demand to scrap NEET-UG

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

DAYS before the Supreme Court begins its hearing on petitions seeking the scrapping of the NEET-UG on July 8, the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Friday filed separate affidavits opposing its cancellation, arguing it would be counterproductive and seriously jeopardise the efforts of lakhs of honest candidates who took the test.

"Scrapping the exam in its entirety would seriously jeopardise lakhs of honest candidates who attempted the question paper in 2024," the affidavit filed by the Union Ministry of Education said. It said demands for cancellation and the retest based on surmises and conjectures must be rejected.

For its part, the NTA, which conducted the exam, said the entire NEET-UG 2024 was carried out fairly and with due confidentiality without any illegal practices. It sought to rubbish the claim of mass malpractice during the exam, arguing it was "completely unfounded, misleading, and lacks any basis".

"It is submitted that the present case is not a case wherein the entire examination process conducted across 4750 centres in 571 cities (including 14 cities abroad) has suffered systematic failure, as it has not been vitiated by all pervasive factors of unfair means or paper leak etc," the agency said. It added that the alleged irregularities were confined to certain centres in two cities — Patna and Godhra.

The NTA said other individual instances of the alleged use of unfair means are very few and do not have any co-relation with the malpractices referred to by the petitioners.

In all, 63 cases of use of unfair means were reported, and a committee submitted its recommendations for action.

NEET-PG on August 11

The NEET-PG 2024 will be held on August 11 in two shifts, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences announced. Scheduled to be held on June 23, it was put off a day before the exam

EXPRESS NEWS

71-yr-old S'mogga man tests positive for Zika

Bengaluru: A 71-year-old man from Shivamogga has tested positive for the Zika virus. Health officials confirmed this case among two suspected cases on Friday. The patient had a travel history to Mysuru and Tumakuru, the officials mentioned. A senior official said another suspected case involving a 25-year-old youth from Sagar taluk is under investigation.

Bridge collapse: 16 Bihar engineers suspended

Patna: After 10 bridges collapsed in a span of two weeks in Bihar, the state government on Friday suspended 16 engineers. "It was found that engineers were negligent and monitoring was ineffective... that is the main reason behind the collapses," said Chaitanya Prasad, additional chief secretary of Water Resources Dept | P9

Over 20 Agniveers dead within a year of induction

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

On a day the Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi continued to allege that compensation has not been paid to the next of kin of Agniveer Ajay Kumar who died in a landmine blast in J&K in January, it emerged that around 20 Agniveers lost their lives in less than a year of their induction. The first batch of Agniveers joined the Army in August 2023.

Around 18 Agniveers who passed away are from the Army. Most of them died in action or due to some ailment.

The latest is of death by suicide in the Air Force, a first for an Agniveer in the IAF.

Srikant Kumar Chaudhary, 22, allegedly died by suicide while on sentry duty at the Air Force Station in Agra late on Tuesday night. He hailed from UP's Ballia district. A Board of Inquiry has been set up to probe his death.

Incidentally, the first death of an Agniveer within the Army was also by suicide. It had stirred a controversy as a military funeral was not accorded to him since it's the Army's policy not to glorify deaths by suicide.

After Rahul Gandhi alleged in the Lok Sabha that Agniveer Ajay Singh's family wasn't given compensation, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hit back, saying ₹1 crore compensation is paid to to families of Agniveers who die in the line of duty.

Incentives galore for artisans, businesswomen

RISHITA KHANNA @ Bengaluru

TO promote local art and modernise traditional industries, the state government has revamped its industrial policy to provide incentives to artisans and women entrepreneurs.

Accordingly, the revamped policy provides a 75% grant for machinery and tools for associations of artisans and craft complexes. Besides, incentives such as loans on 4% interest and 10% market development assistance for handicraft products will be extended. Industries Minister MB Patil said the state now offers free training in e-marketing and ICT at the National Institute of Design and the National Institute of Fashion Technology, among others, with a scope for study tours. P4

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Social Welfare Department
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
38th Death Anniversary of
Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram
Architect of the Green Revolution, National Leader and Former Deputy Prime Minister of India
Garlanding the Statue of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram by
Sri Siddaramaiah, Hon'ble Chief Minister and
Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare.
July 6th, 2024, Saturday at 11.00 AM. West Gate, Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru.
Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare, participating in a Department Meeting.
"Truth is One, ways are Many"
- Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram
As is enshrined in our constitution, "to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture" - is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.
Commissioner
Social Welfare Department
@SWDGok